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HIGHWAY ACCIDENTS IN NEW YORK CITY DURING 1915.

BY MILLS E. CASE, *Secretary to the Police Department, City of New York.*

The subject of highway accidents must receive a great deal of attention in the future. At the present time, the number of persons killed or injured annually in the streets of our cities is very large, but the general public is not aware of the fact. In New York City, during 1915, the fatalities from street accidents were $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the number of persons murdered in the entire city, yet it is probable that the press of the city gave 10 times as much space to murders as to accidents. Unless radical measures are taken the number of accidents will increase rapidly in all large American cities, especially in the older cities which have narrow streets. The steel skeleton type of construction has made possible skyscraper office buildings and apartment houses. The old streets are inadequate for the population of the new buildings. Some relief from street congestion is obtained through rapid transit lines, especially subways. Even the dangerous motor vehicle has done something to reduce street congestion. It takes less space on the street than the vehicles and horses which it supplants; it goes faster and so occupies the space a shorter time; it carries a larger load and so makes fewer units necessary. But each successive year a larger fleet of vehicles and a larger crowd of pedestrians must use the streets; each year the resident population increases; each year the number of visitors increases; each year more women "go to business."

In the congested residential sections of our large cities, the children must play in the streets. The old fashioned house had a yard; the tenements and apartment houses of today cover practically the whole of the lot and frequently contain children enough to fill a play-ground larger than the bare lot would be. This is a condition which is getting worse every year.

Street accidents in New York City have been recorded for several years in the precinct "Arrest and Aided Record,"

but I cannot find that any compilation of accident statistics was made prior to 1914. Police Commissioner Arthur Woods saw the importance of the matter and ordered a compilation of the statistics from the precinct records for the calendar year. He also authorized a system of special reports on highway accidents, which went into effect January 1, 1915. These reports are forwarded to the Bureau of Statistics at Headquarters, where they are compiled monthly in very elaborate tables.

Prior to August, 1915, the statistics were compiled by hand; since then, they have been compiled by means of perforated cards, with the necessary machinery for handling them. During the earlier months, it was not practicable to make the detailed studies which the mechanical method rendered possible in the later months. The tables for the year, presented herewith, are necessarily limited to the extent of the early tables. A word of caution is needed concerning the comparability of these tables with the 1914 tables (published in the Annual Report of the Police Department, 1914). Because of the supervision of the Bureau of Statistics, the 1915 statistics are more nearly complete than those for 1914. An effort was made during 1915 to obtain and include the after-mortality, of which there is no record in earlier years.

The tables must be read in the light of the following limitations upon the terms used:

Accident—In these tables no accident is included unless a person is killed or injured. The records and the reports to the Bureau of Statistics include all highway accidents known to the police. The elimination of the accidents in which no person is injured leaves a fair "sample" for administrative purposes. About 20 per cent. of the reports received are eliminated from the tabulation, because no one was injured.

Highway—Includes bridges, paths in parks; excludes elevated or subway trains, stations and stairs, ferries and other boats and piers or docks which are not a part of the highway. Some accidents which occur in the highway are excluded because independent of the place of occurrence, *e. g.*, falls on sidewalk due to intoxication, illness, or play. About 5 per cent. of all reports are excluded on this ground. The eliminating

is done at the Bureau of Statistics and the precinct officers are encouraged to forward all doubtful cases.

Fatal—The 1915 tables are corrected for after-mortality reported up to January 31, 1916. The correction began to be applied in February, 1915, hence, some January fatalities are not included, because unknown. No deaths from 1914 accidents are included in these tables.

Collision—During the first six months of 1915, this term includes cases of bicycles struck by a heavier vehicle. Since then, such cases are included with "Persons Struck By—."

Cause of Accident—There is an annoying overlapping of categories here due to the fact that the original reports indicate the causes in terms of varying generality. It is not practicable to return the reports for amendment in this respect. Rather than lose the specific information by throwing it into the general classes, the Bureau has preferred to use the awkward grouping which fits the material.

HIGHWAY ACCIDENTS IN WHICH PERSONS WERE INJURED OR KILLED IN THE STREETS, SIDEWALKS, PUBLIC HIGHWAYS, OR ON THE ROADS
AND WALKS IN PUBLIC PARKS, NEW YORK CITY, 1915.

Nature of Accidents.	Accidents.			Persons Killed.				Persons Injured.					
	Total.	Fatal.	Non-Fatal.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Under 6 Years.	6 Years to 16 Years.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Under 6 Years.	6 Years to 16 Years.
Persons struck by—													
Railway trains.....	23	13	10	13	11	2	1	2	11	8	3	1	2
Street cars.....	1,771	77	1,694	77	58	19	8	10	1,730	1,227	503	277	368
Motor vehicles—													
Passenger.....	4,865	177	4,688	178	127	51	27	72	4,830	3,733	1,097	537	1,742
Truck or delivery.....	1,212	105	1,107	105	82	23	15	43	1,136	885	251	144	398
Motorcycles.....	377	...	377	...	...	...	...	...	414	270	144	63	114
Horse-drawn vehicles—													
Passenger.....	249	3	246	3	3	...	1	...	252	167	85	77	92
Truck or wagon.....	2,441	100	2,341	100	75	25	42	37	2,379	1,772	607	629	766
Saddle horse.....	16	...	16	...	...	...	...	...	16	13	3	4	3
Bicycles.....	352	3	349	3	2	1	...	1	357	226	131	71	158
Other vehicles.....	72	1	71	1	1	...	...	...	71	51	20	17	26
Falls and miscellaneous injuries received while riding on, boarding or alighting from vehicles.....	3,026	47	2,979	47	45	2	...	1	3,026	2,230	796	33	149
Falls, etc., while stealing rides.....	313	9	304	9	9	...	1	7	305	296	9	46	212
Collisions.....	2,428	41	2,387	42	38	4	2	5	2,982	2,489	493	46	202
Other accidents to vehicles.....	573	19	554	21	17	4	...	...	779	636	143	10	44
Runaways.....	421	13	408	13	9	4	5	1	483	431	52	23	30
Non-vehicular accidents—													
Falls.....	3,005	24	2,981	30	20	10	...	2	3,093	1,811	1,282	190	411
Hit by falling objects.....	584	1	583	1	...	1	...	1	624	436	188	48	108
Bitten by dogs.....	120	...	120	...	...	...	...	...	125	101	24	26	64
Miscellaneous accidents.....	692	16	676	16	13	3	4	2	708	584	124	59	196
Totals.....	22,540	649	21,891	659	510	149	106	184	23,321	17,366	5,955	2,301	5,085

ACCIDENTS BY MONTHS.

Nature of Accidents.	Total.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
Persons struck by—	23	1	1	1	...	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	4
Railway trains.....	1,771	116	152	184	174	140	145	151	157	149	151	125	127
Street cars.....	4,865	272	211	289	398	432	424	501	438	582	610	431	277
Motor vehicles—	1,212	100	69	99	86	92	88	137	119	104	131	91	96
Passenger.....	377	7	15	23	38	46	48	47	47	40	35	22	9
Truck or delivery.....													
Motorcycle.....													
Horse-drawn—	249	11	11	24	27	28	11	31	28	30	26	14	8
Passenger.....	2,441	123	136	204	247	225	225	261	242	230	242	177	129
Truck or wagon.....	16	2	1	1	2	2	...	3	...	4	1	...	...
Saddle horse.....	352	6	13	18	39	50	47	59	45	40	23	12	...
Bicycles.....	72	...	...	6	2	6	2	22	5	11	6	7	5
Other vehicles.....													
Falls and miscellaneous injuries received while riding on, boarding, or alighting from vehicles.....	3,026	192	155	202	230	300	326	363	339	323	225	184	187
Falls, etc., while stealing rides.....	313	9	8	22	22	27	40	34	42	42	41	18	8
Collisions.....	2,428	137	161	176	189	241	285	229	201	197	209	211	192
Other accidents to vehicles.....	573	23	26	41	39	51	49	53	53	58	69	61	50
Runaways.....	421	25	22	40	40	38	46	50	33	25	34	34	34
Non-vehicular accidents—													
Falls.....	3,005	387	263	300	297	201	209	207	204	187	204	195	351
Hit by falling objects.....	584	41	33	41	64	67	73	58	61	46	31	36	33
Bitten by dogs.....	120	6	4	6	11	15	22	16	6	11	10	8	5
Miscellaneous accidents.....	692	122	78	48	51	78	76	67	48	44	35	19	26
Total.....	22,540	1,580	1,359	1,725	1,956	2,041	2,118	2,291	2,071	2,126	2,084	1,648	1,541

VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS.

Cause.	Number of Accidents.	Cause.	Number of Accidents.
Fault or incapacity of injured person—		Leaving horse unattended.	14
Stealing ride.	417	Intoxication.	38
Improperly riding on vehicle.	203	Illness.	2
Improperly boarding or alighting.	1,290	Carelessness.	105
Falling under or against vehicle.	147	Other faults.	10
Running into or in front of vehicle.	955	Defects of vehicles—	
Walking, standing or sitting in street or on curb.	220	Steering gear.	76
Crossing street not at crossing.	3,289	Brakes.	43
Skating or playing ball in street.	172	Wheels.	47
Playing in street.	1,099	Axle or fifth wheel.	50
Coasting or riding toy vehicle in street.	32	Harness, pole, etc.	61
Improperly riding bicycle.	52	Unmanageable vehicle.	79
Intoxication.	330	Vehicle starting or stopping sud- denly.	75
Illness.	22	Other defects.	43
Crippled condition.	29	Skidding of vehicle—	
Blindness.	3	Slippery street:	
Deafness.	26	With tire chains.	100
Working in street.	150	Without tire chains.	227
Carelessness.	203	Other causes:	
Other faults.	22	With tire chains.	10
Fault of driver—		Without tire chains.	80
Speeding.	67	Other causes—	
Recklessness.	85	Slippery streets.	26
On wrong side of street.	175	Excavation in street.	2
Turning corner improperly.	54	Obstruction in street.	7
Coasting.	1	Object in street.	38
Violating 8-foot law.	16	Street lights out.	5
Improperly towing vehicle.	8	Street poorly lighted.	3
Failing to signal.	14	Other street condition.	41
Disregarding signal.	5	Fog.	3
Lights out.	23	Rain.	5
No flag or light on projection.	1	Snow.	2
Vehicle improperly loaded.	12	High wind.	8
On sidewalk.	20	Traffic conditions.	75
Driving into area closed to traffic.	2	Miscellaneous causes.	186
Obstructing traffic.	1	No cause given.	7,486
Backing.	36	Total.	18,139
Leaving auto unattended.	11		